

HARRY W. GRAY HOUSE
1005 South Quinn Street
Arlington
Virginia

HABS VA-1434
VA-1434

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HARRY W. GRAY HOUSE

HABS No. VA-1434

Location: 1005 South Quinn Street, in Gray's subdivision of the Arlington View neighborhood near the intersection of Washington Boulevard and Columbia Pike, in Arlington, Arlington County, Virginia.

The coordinates for the Harry W. Gray House are 38.865156N, 77.074764W; these were obtained using Google Earth in August 2010 and, it is assumed, NAD 1983. There is no restriction on the release of the locational data to the public.

Description: Harry Gray built a two-story, freestanding house that resembles the urban rowhouse in form and in plan. The building was constructed of brick laid in 5:1 common bond and embellished with Italianate architectural elements, such as the window surrounds and entablature. The front façade is three bays across and the entrance is in the easternmost bay. The paneled, wood door is capped by a transom light and segmental arched, dog-eared lintel. The surround has chamfered edges. The windows are glazed with lights arranged two-over-two. Like the door, the window surrounds are chamfered and the lintel is a dog-eared, segmental arch. The second-story windows resemble those on the first story; all have louvered shutters. The entablature has a molded cornice and three foliate brackets. A one-story porch runs across the façade. The porch roof is supported by Tuscan columns set on brick piers. A balustrade runs between the piers and the porch is accessed from the sides. Standing seam metal covers the shed roof over the house and that over the porch as well. The east elevation has one window, likely added in ca. 1979, while the west has two windows and door on the first floor and two windows on the second. There is rowlock brick coping along the shed roof on the west elevation, and the rear kitchen ell extends on this side as well. The east now includes an enclosed wood porch. Two double-hung sash windows glazed with two-over-two lights pierce the second-story of the east elevation of the rear ell. These windows are placed beneath a segmental arch and have wood surrounds and a rowlock sill.

Inside, the side-entry floor plan included a hall running north-south from the entrance, a living room, and a dining room on the first floor and bedrooms opening off the hall on the second floor. The ell provided space for a kitchen; a bathroom was added when the porch at the southeast corner was enclosed.

History: More than an architectural curiosity, the Italianate-styled, free-standing rowhouse is important as the only extant example of the type recorded in Arlington County, Virginia, and as a tangible reminder of the African American experience as newly freedmen in the post Civil War years. The Harry W. Gray House represents the successful transition from slavery to landownership, a shift symbolically undertaken in the shadow of the Lee family's Arlington estate.

Harry W. Gray (ca. 1851-1913) built the rowhouse in 1881, shortly after buying the land from J.R. Johnston. Gray had been born into slavery at Arlington, and when he was judged old enough, worked there as a masonry assistant. After emancipation, Gray and his family stayed at Arlington as residents of Freedmen's Village, where they rented fifteen acres in Green Valley. They farmed the land and sold produce at Seventh Street and Louisiana Avenue, in northwest Washington, DC. Harry Gray helped his parents with the property, and also worked in a brickyard until securing a job in the U.S. Patent Office. In 1878 he married Martha Hoard, a freed slave from Montpelier.

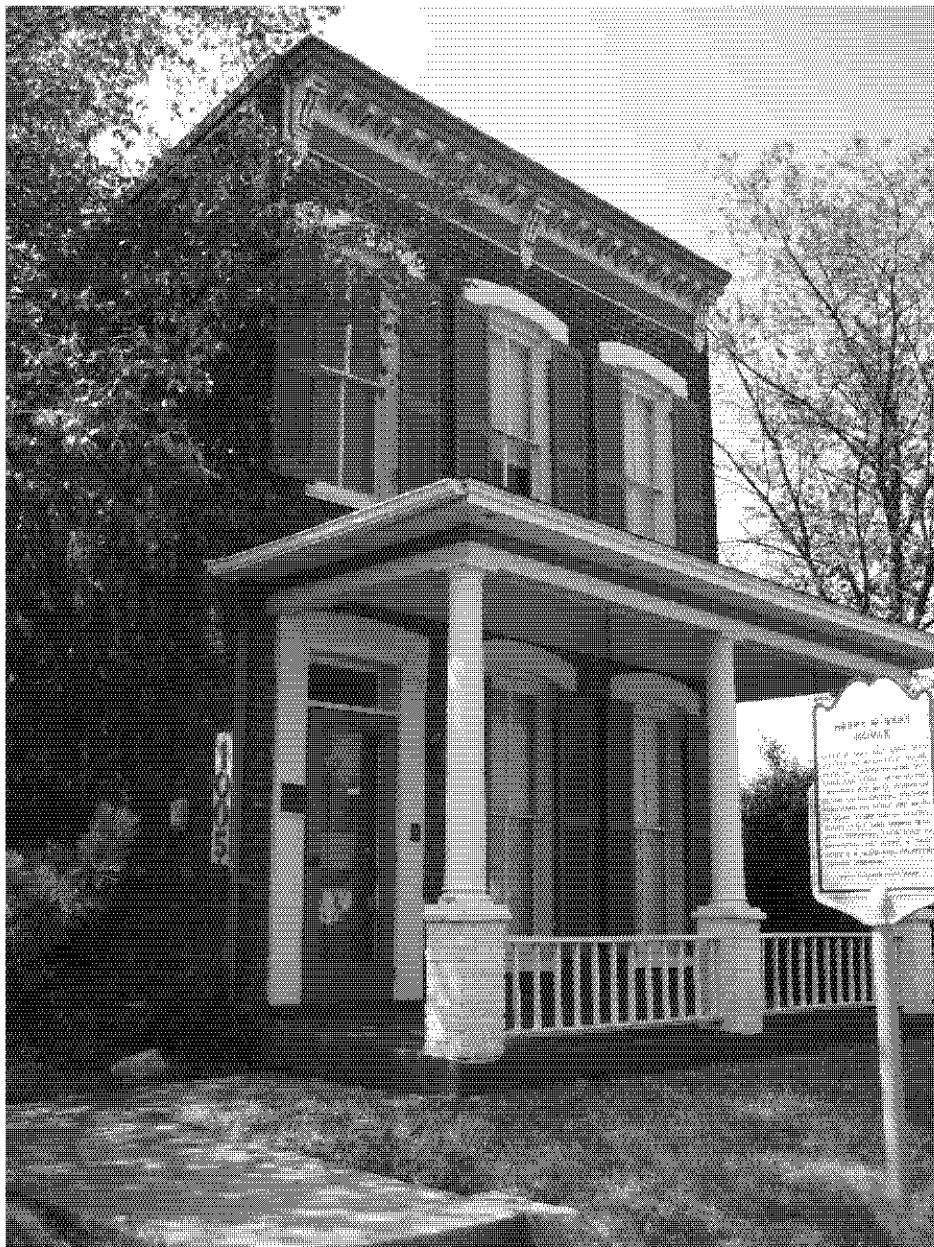
Gray and Hoard bought a nine-acre parcel in Johnson's Hill, a neighborhood just south of the Freedmen's Village, and Gray constructed their house on that lot. He modeled their dwelling on the brick rowhouses built in Washington, DC, in the last decades of the nineteenth century. These structures were larger and more ornate than their predecessors made of wood; embellishments included ornamental cornices and surrounds and these details influenced Gray's design for his house. The house remained in the family until 1979.

Sources: Jennifer Bunting Hallock, "Harry W. Gray House," Nomination May 2003, National Register for Historic Places, National Park Service.

Site visit, 2010.

Historian: Virginia B. Price, 2010.

Figure 1. Perspective view looking to the front façade. (Photograph by author, 2010).



ADDENDUM TO:
HARRY W. GRAY HOUSE
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PHOTOGRAPHS

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